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## CHAPTER LII

### ON A JOURNEY

The incidents related in the following chapter took place a good many years ago, before Hokkaidō was as accesible to foreigners as it is now. There were hardly any good roads and not a foot of railway had been laid, nor surveys for such taken. Nor had the rivers of the interior been bridged. One had to travel on horseback, sitting cross-legged on a pack-saddle, as a rule, though sometimes it was possible to obtain a foreign-made saddle. The deep rivers were forded by means of small dug-out boats or large barges, which took in men, baggage, and horses too. These were generally drawn across by means of ropes.

My old friend and servant, Parapita by name, used to pride himself on his great learning, and he taught me many things when we were journeying together. I gathered much from him as we were making our way among the villages. He was always very entertaining and much of what he said and did was quite unexpected and often most practical.

The pony I was riding one day was a very old, small, and poor one. He was not up to carrying my weight and was remarkably shaky in the knees. He was also a mighty stumbler. As we were going along at a fairly sharp trot, he suddenly stumbled and came down. I was immediately and without warning shot like an arrow several yards clean over his fore-quarters, for I found nothing for my feet, which were crossed over his shoulders, to grip. His head was nowhere to be seen. The poor brute had fallen on his own head and neck! There was the poor head tucked nicely under one of his

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ONE OF MY STOPPING-PLACES